



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Housing: Question on Cost of Utilities (H-14)

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL USES OF DATA ABOUT COST OF UTILITIES

- The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families uses these data to assess the need for housing assistance for low-income and elderly low-income households.
- The HHS's Administration for Children and Families also uses these data to indicate the costs of fuels used by various income groups and to calculate block grant allocations by low-income households in a state.
- The HHS's Administration on Aging relies on state and local agencies to use these data and allocate funds for housing the elderly "taking into consideration...the number of older individuals who have the greatest social need."
- Utility companies use these data to forecast the need for additional facilities or services.
- State and local governments, faith-based and other non-profit organizations, and businesses use these data to plan, budget, and pay benefits.

EXAMPLES OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR DATA ABOUT COST OF UTILITIES

- Older Americans Act of 1965
- Community Services Block Grant Act
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

<www.census.gov/acs/www>

QUESTION AT IT APPEARS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

14 a. **LAST MONTH**, what was the cost of electricity for this house, apartment, or mobile home?

Last month's cost – Dollars

\$.00

OR

☐ Included in rent or condominium fee

☐ No charge or electricity not used

b. **LAST MONTH**, what was the cost of gas for this house, apartment, or mobile home?

Last month's cost – Dollars

\$.00

OR

☐ Included in rent or condominium fee

☐ Included in electricity payment entered above

☐ No charge or gas not used

c. **IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**, what was the cost of water and sewer for this house, apartment, or mobile home? If you have lived here less than 12 months, estimate the cost.

Past 12 months' cost – Dollars

\$.00

OR

☐ Included in rent or condominium fee

☐ No charge

d. **IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**, what was the cost of oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc., for this house, apartment, or mobile home? If you have lived here less than 12 months, estimate the cost.

Past 12 months' cost – Dollars

\$.00

OR

☐ Included in rent or condominium fee

☐ No charge or these fuels not used



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HISTORY OF THE COST OF UTILITIES QUESTION

- The question on the cost of utilities has been asked since 1980.
- The question also was asked on the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire.

WHY WE ASK IT THIS WAY

The question about the cost of utilities is part of a question about monthly housing costs for mortgages; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance; utilities; fuels; etc. Listing these items separately on the questionnaire improves accuracy of the responses about each item. When combined with income data, this item is used to measure housing affordability and excessive shelter costs.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey that collects socioeconomic and housing information and is the planned replacement for the long form in the 2010 Census.

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to conduct the ACS in every county, American Indian and Alaska Native Area, Hawaiian Home Land, and in Puerto Rico, once it is fully implemented, pending Congressional funding. The ACS has been tested across the country since 1996.

HOW CAN I SEE THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ?

The information collected from these tests is published on the Census Bureau's Web site at:

<www.census.gov/acs/www>

and American FactFinder at:

<<http://factfinder.census.gov>>

For more information call, e-mail, or visit our Web site:

1-888-456-7215

<cmo.acs@census.gov>

<<http://www.census.gov/acs/www>>

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions